



# Coastal Wildlife Conservation Initiative

# What is the Coastal Wildlife Conservation Initiative?

- A multi-agency approach to address coastal issues that impact wildlife
- Will include wildlife, habitat, and human needs



# Who is developing the Initiative?

- FWC is the lead agency
  - Multiple DOI's will provide expertise and guidance
- Partners include DEP, DCA, county governments, and others
- Diverse range of stakeholder input will be sought



# Why is a Statewide Initiative needed?

- Many species of wildlife are dependent on coastal areas
- 17 listed species and subspecies use the coastal zone for all or part of their life cycle
- Difficulties of individual species management plans
  - Exceed FWC staff capacity
  - Potential for conflicting recommendations



# Beach Mice

- 6 subspecies in Florida
- Inhabit frontal and scrub dunes
- 5 of the 6 are state and federally listed
- Habitat loss and fragmentation are main reasons for listing



Ron Loggins



# Shorebirds



Nancy Douglass

- More than 30 species of shorebirds use Florida's coastline at some point during their life cycle
- Require sites for foraging, roosting, and nesting
- Use sandy beaches, mudflats and dunes
- 6 listed species, 1 candidate species
- Disturbance, habitat loss and degradation are primary causes of decline



# Sea Turtles

- 5 species found nesting on Florida's beaches
- All 5 species are listed
- Coastal armoring, beach nourishment, pollution, predation, and artificial lighting all threaten sea turtles



# Additional Species of Concern

- Loss of habitat and human impacts have led to declining populations of other species
- Fish:
  - Gulf sturgeon
  - Game fish
- Invertebrates:
  - Tiger beetles
- Other reptiles:
  - Diamondback terrapins



FWC photo





# Why is a Statewide Initiative needed?

- Many declining species of wildlife are dependent on coastal areas
- Emerging issues make addressing the coastal zone a priority



Alex Kropp



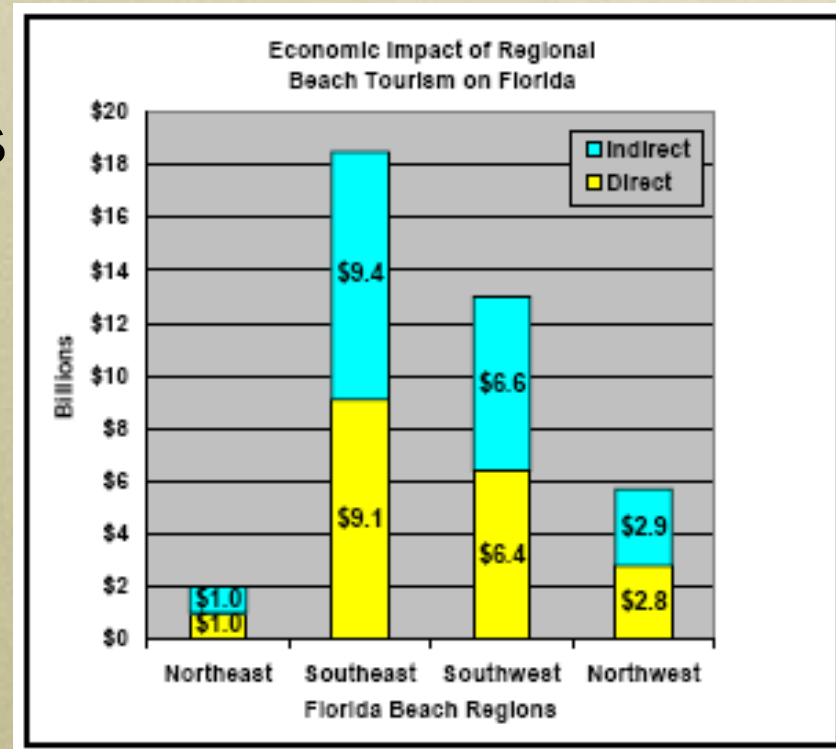
# Coastal Issues

- Wildlife needs and human actions are often in conflict



# Beach Economics

- The economic impact of Florida's beach visitors in 2000 included 442,000 jobs and **over \$700 million in sales tax**
- Total spending (direct and indirect) by Florida's beach visitors in 2000 was estimated at **\$41.6 billion**



# Threats to wildlife and habitat

- Habitat loss, fragmentation, and degradation
- Disturbance
- Coastal hazards
- Sea level rise



FWC



Sea Grant  
Florida

# Coastal Wildlife Conservation Initiative Vision

The Coastal Wildlife Conservation Initiative (CWCI) will ensure the long-term conservation of native wildlife in coastal ecosystems throughout Florida in balance with human activities



## PROTECT NESTING SHOREBIRDS!

SHOREBIRD NESTS ARE EASILY DISTURBED.



Black Skuas, a species of gull, lay 7-9 eggs in a shallow scrape in the sand.

**Avoid walking near posted nesting areas.**

Flushing birds off nests exposes eggs and chicks to the sun and predators. Watch where you step. Eggs and young of shorebirds are not easy to see. Can you find the chicks in these two photos?



Least Terns, a threatened species, lay 4-5 eggs in a shallow scrape in the sand.

Between March and September, shorebirds nest in colonies on open, sandy beaches. They need areas away from human disturbance in order to nest and raise their young successfully.

**IF BIRDS APPEAR AGITATED OR TAKE FLIGHT, YOU ARE TOO CLOSE!**



# Objectives

- Develop regional meetings as a part of outreach effort
- Create a partnership network to address information needs on coastal issues



# What do we hope to accomplish?

- Develop partnerships
- Coordinate activities of stakeholders
- Inclusive process



# Completed

- Met with heads of Agencies to explain CWCI
  - Department of Environmental Protection
  - Department of Community Affairs
- Presented CWCI concept at Florida Beaches Habitat Conservation Plan meeting





# Next Steps

- Meeting with Southwest Region FWC staff
- Meeting with Florida Wildlife Research Institute staff



# Regional Stakeholder Meeting

- Two stakeholder meetings
  - User groups
  - Agencies
- Deliver information and gather feedback
- Meeting – May 11<sup>th</sup> in Fort Myers



# Stakeholder Meeting

- Personal, economic and social interests
- Introduce the CWCI
- Gather feedback – stake, perceptions and concerns



# Agency Meeting

- Conflicting missions and regulations
  - Department of Environmental Protection
  - Department of Community Affairs
  - Regional Governments
  - County Governments
  - City Governments



# Project Goals

- Long term partnership between FWC, Florida Sea Grant and Stakeholders
- Process model to be expanded to all FWC regions

